1688
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A DIALOGUE BETWEEN Simeon and Levi,

Upon this

TOPICK,

WHETHER

Flying from Suffering, in a Day of Persecution; Or,

Complying with the Terms of the Persecuting Party, for a little Ease, be the more Honourable.

With Allowance.

Levi, WEll met, Brother *Simeon*, after so great a Storm. The Blasts of *Boreas* have blown fierce upon us. The Elements have been black over us; and nothing but the boisterous noise of Thunder-Claps have been heard among us. But now, through the Clemency of our Gratious So-

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veraiagn, there is a great allay. The Clouds are ſcattered, the fury of the Wind is over; the Air is calm and ſerene, and we being ſo happily met under a ſhadowing Tree, in this pleaſant bright day, pray let us ſit down and talk a little.

Simeon, *With all my heart.*

Levi, Then, how has it been with you all this time? how have you ſecured your ſelf from the terrible ſufferings that have been every where? I ſee you look pritty brisk and bonny, which makes me conjecture you have not felt much of it.

Sim. *Why, truly, no Brother, I have not; for in its firſt appearance (which was ſo gaſtly, it made me tremble) I finding my ſtrength to decay, betook me to the Country; where I lived private, and in quiet, from the noiſe and clamours of all ſuch things.*

Levi, But had you not a Paſtoral charge of a Flock?

Sim. *I had ſo.*

Levi, How then could you leave them?

Sim. *I wiſely fore-ſaw, the rage of the Storm growing ſo great, that every one would be forced to ſhift for himſelf; and I was willing to ſave one betimes.*

Levi, Methinks you have not acted like a good, but bad Shepherd, whoſe proper Charector is, when he ſees the Wolf coming, to fly away, and leave his Sheep to be devoured.

Sim. *I confeſs that looks a little awry upon me; but I have a plain Text to bear me out in what I have done.*

Levi, Pray tell it me.

Sim. *Why, if they Perſecute you in this City, flee into another.*

Levi, Without the help of *Joſeph's* Cup, I divined what

what your Scripture would be. But you cannot ſurely think this any warrant at all for your practice: For beſide that, this was ſpoken to Apoſtles, who had no care of any particular people: So it is meant of a flying only from ſuffering (which may be innocent) but not from work, which is your caſe; you (*Jonah* like) fled from your Paſtoral Employment, to live Solitary in the Woods, to keep your skin whole.

Sim. *Well, I will not ſtand in it, but I have done amiſs; but of two Evils, I thought t'was prudent to choſe the leſſer; if I had ſtayed, I might have gone to Priſon, and dyed (oh! terrible) as ſome other did, and ſo have been of no uſe now: Whereas I was ready, upon the firſt news of his Majeſties Indulgence (and as ſoon as I heard the Coaſt was clear of Informers) to pack up my Auls, and away to* London, *with as much ſpeed as ever I tripped from it, (which was ſuch, as I aſſure you ſecured me from the fate of* Lot's *Wife) and to reparing my waſted Synagogue I went; raiſed up the Galleries, jumbled together the Pews, and ſold them too, as faſt as I could tole in Cuſtomers; (for I had a pannick fit of Zeal freſh come upon me to do my Maſters work) and am now as hard at it as ever, and thump it about, as in the days of yore, and mean to continue ſo till——But pray, now you have examined me; give me leave to demand, where you have ſanctuaried your ſelf; for you look as though you had born as little of the brunt as I?*

Levi, Why, truly when I firſt ſaw the Clouds a gathering, I buckled on my Helmet, advanced my Voice, and ſtanding in the high Place of the Tabernacle, I ſolemnly warned my People, with ſtretched forth Lungs, to prepare for the approaching Storm, and to be ſure to ſtand to their Tackling, and not baſely deſert the Cauſe,

as they would avoid another day the forever odious name of Renogadoes; and this I continued with much violence to do, till I was unhappily seized, and cast into Bondage.

Sim. *Oh! sad* (Horrisco audiens)

Levi, But I tell you (for the encouragement of all that dare try it a little while: for I am not for long Imprisonment) I had a great deal of comfort, and refreshment in the time of my Captivity.

Sim. *As how I pray?*

Levi, Many sweet doses of glittering Guineys for a Cordial in a morning; sundry pretty Angels ministring to my necessities on high noon, when Colon began to grumble; and several Noble treatments attended my acceptance at night.

Sim. *If I had known this, I would not have fled so fast from a Prison.*

Levi, Ay, But Brother, you must know there was an ebbing tide in those Enjoyments (as there is in all created Comforts) the Springs of Consolation too soon (Ah, I tell you, too soon) abated of their Exuberancy; and then (ah then, my Strength fainted, and my Spirit no longer able to bear up) failed within me; then every thing in a Prison seemed dissatisfactory to me, and then it was I began to groan for Liberty; 'tis true, I had Friends in aboundance came to visit me, but they were dry (therefore miserable) Comforters, Words flowed with a mighty torrent from their Mouthes, but there was no dropping at their Fingers ends, from whence I always derived the most Satisfaction and Encouragement: I tell you Brother, one good well-mannag'd Pocket-Argument ever had more prevalency with me to persevere, then

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an hundred airy Throat ones; for whilst I was buoy'd up by the former, I ſtoutly affirmed (with no want of Confidence) the Ceremonies of the Church of *England* to be Abominable, the Frame of her Conſtitution wholly diſ-agreeing to Goſpel Light and Truth; but when thoſe Supports ſhrunk from me, I ſoon alter'd my Opinion, I got a new pair of Spectacles, and read over the *Common Prayer*; and truly I could find nothing but good and ſound matter in it; and ſo without further conſideration, I reſolved *(rebus ſic ſtantibus)* to yeild a profound Conformity to it, which I forthwith promiſed, and then with winged Celerity, I bid my Priſon, my Keeper, my People, my Integrity an entire farewel.

Sim. *Had you not better have gone into the Country as I did?*

Levi, No, I thank you, I made a better Market of my ſhort Impriſonment; I might have followed the Plough-tail long enough, before I ſhould have met with thoſe feeling Contentments I did there.

Sim. *Which of us was the honeſter Man?*

Levi, Nay, I can't tell that, but I think we have neither of us much to ſpare of that Commodity.

Sim. *Which of us took the more honourable Way?*

Levi, That muſt be left to the Judgment of ſome Learned Brethren, who are not altogether unacquainted with either of our ways.

Sim. *What will the Men of the World ſay of us?*

Levi, I know what they ſay of you.

Sim. *What?*

Levi, A Man may take a great deal of pains for God, in a fine cool day, when 'tis neither too hot, nor too cold; He may lay about him much, even to a mighty thumping

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the innocent Pulpit, making the Feathers lead a wearied life for want of a little rest; He may be very Industrious and Laborious; He may Preach much, Pray much, Catechize much, and yet when it comes to the pinch, and there be most need of his work **Does Little.**

Sim. *Say you so Brother; Ay, but do you know how the Carnal sort speak of you?*

Levi, Deliver me out of pain, inform me quickly.

Sim. *Why, they (that is, the Sons and Daughters of Men) say very peremptorily, A Man may Bluster and Thunder, lift up his Voice like a Trumpet, Roar like a Wide-mouth'd Bull of* Bashan, *lay about him like a Thrasher, Whine and Cry, Baul and Yaul, Press and Perswade his Auditors to stand their Ground, and not comply in the least with sinful Traditions; and yet, when it comes to his own particular Case, to Buckle or Suffer, even such a one may shew himself, (to his never to be forgotten shame)* **Non Vincens sed Victus.**

Levi, We can't help it, I wish they have nothing more to say.

Sim. *Do you think they will be tattling any thing else?*

Levi, Yes, Yes, no doubt they will draw some outward Inferences from both our Practices: As *1st* True Zeal to God can't be measured by Mens keeping a noise, when they have nothing to oppose them, till they come to the tryal of a suffering Testimony. *2dly.* They will be apt to conclude, that unless *Jesus Christ* hath some faithfuller Workmen, then you or I have appeared to be, his Work will certainly be left undone, when there is the most need of doing it. *3dly.* I am afraid they will infer, that as our Saviour chose to ride upon a simple Ass, rather then a trapped Horse; so (according to the truth

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of the Myſtery) he calls out poor low Men (that are little eſteemed by the World) to bear the burthen of his Service, in the day when he has moſt ſervice to do. *Laſtly*, 'Tis ten to one but thoſe, who are not Followers of us, will be ſurmiſing, our preſent hot-ſpur re-aſſumed Zeal, proceeds rather from a love to our dearly beloved ſelves, and our own Intereſt, then any true deſire of advancing Chriſts mediatory Kingdom.

Sim. *Theſe are baſe Inferences, and yet too natural. But Pray, let us meet ſuddenly again to diſcourſe of our Friends of the Congregational way, to remark how they have carried it in the time of Perſecution, whether like us or no?*

Levi, I fear (upon examining the matter) we ſhall find a vaſt difference.

Sold at the *Three Kyes* in *Nags-Head-Court* in *Grace-Church-Street*, over-againſt the *Conduit*, 1688.

of the Mystery) he calls our poor low Men (that are little esteemed by the Vulgar) to bear the Sarthen of his Service, in the day when he lies most service to do. Lastly, [illegible] to one [illegible] those, who are not Followers of us, will be [illegible], our present hot-spur re-assumed Zeal, proceeds rather from a love to our dearly beloved selves, and our own interest, then any true desire of advancing Christs mediatory Kingdom.

Sim. I have a base Inferences, and yet too natural. But Pray, let us meet suddenly again to discourse of our Friends of the Congregational way, to remark how they have carried it in the time of Persecution, whether like us or no?

Levi, I fear (upon examining the matter) we shall find a vast difference.

Sold at the Three Kyes in Mags-Head-Court in Grace-Church-Street, over-against the Conduit, 1688.

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